



Office for Health
Improvement
& Disparities

South East Gambling Harms Health Needs Assessment

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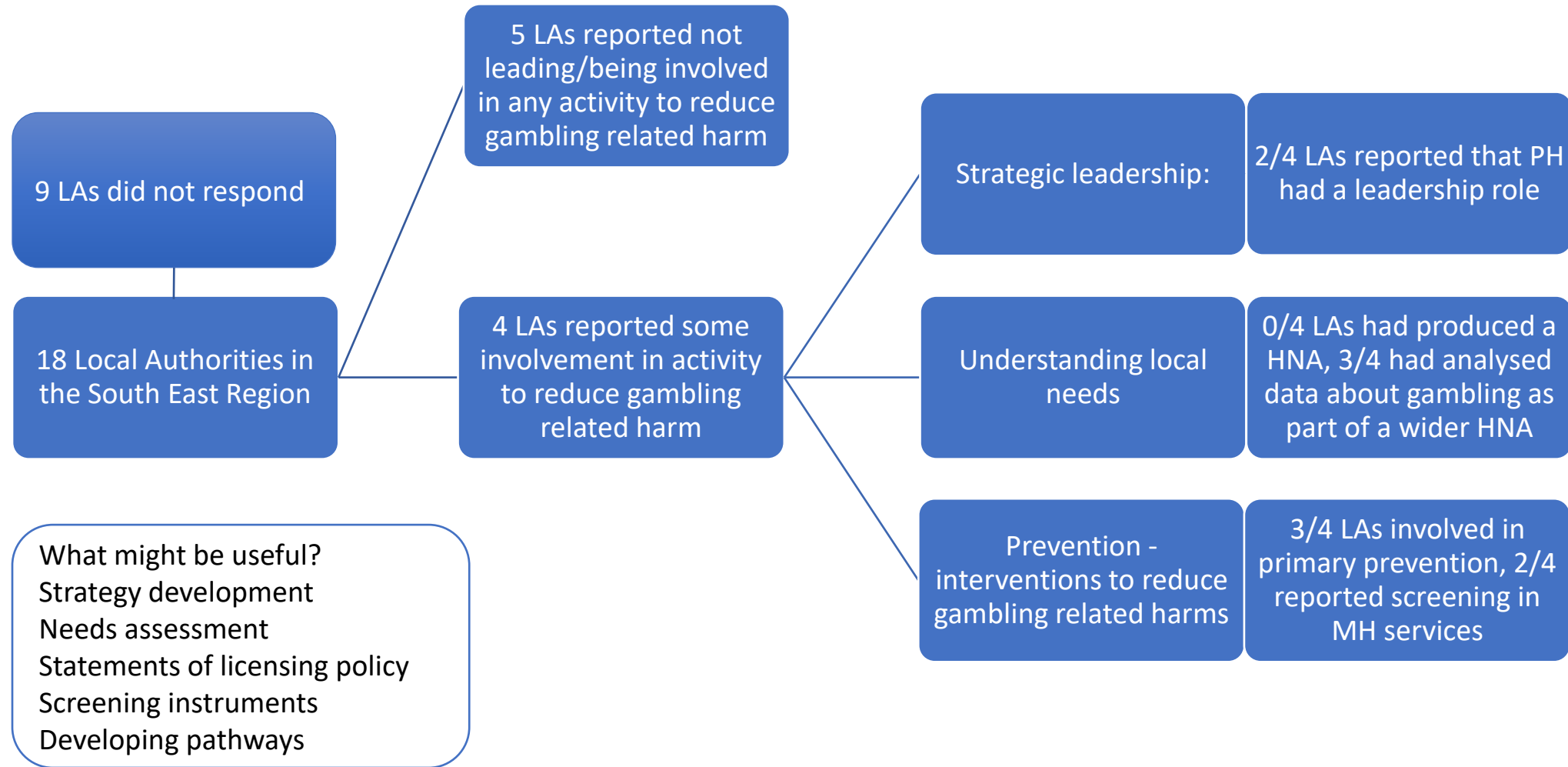
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Content

- Context
- Introduction
- Background
 - What is gambling?
 - What are gambling-related harms?
- Local profile
 - Gambling in the South East
 - Treatment and support
- Evidence base
 - What works to reduce gambling related harm
- Recommendations



Context: Mapping work with LAs



Introduction

- Why this is an important public health issue?
 - A large proportion of the population gamble but for most, there are no (or limited) negative implications of this gambling activity, however, for some, gambling is harmful
 - Public health has a responsibility to protect people from preventable harm and exploitation
- Wider health and wellbeing issues
 - Gambling can be associated with other behavioural risk factors and health outcomes
 - These risk factors tend to co-exist in vulnerable groups
- Purpose of this document
 - Aims: to understand gambling related harms in the South East to support prevention, treatment, and harm reduction
 - Objectives: Collate local/national data; describe the provision of care/treatment; share evidence/best practice; make recommendations



Background: What is gambling?

- Gambling is gaming, betting, or participating in a lottery that involves risking losing money (or other belongings of value), for a chance to win a larger sum of money or another prize. The game may involve an element of skill or luck, and the outcome is uncertain.
- Common forms of gambling:
 - Lotteries
 - Instant games (including scratch cards)
 - Bingo
 - Sports betting
 - Casinos
 - Card or dice games
- The gambling industry
 - Great Britain has one of the largest gambling industries in the world generating profits of £12.7 billion in 2021. There are 8,625 gambling premises in Great Britain. In 2018, 54% of adults participated in gambling. Gambling activity overall has decreased since 2012, although online gambling has increased during this time.



Background: What are gambling-related harms?

- “Gambling related harms are the adverse impacts from gambling on the health and wellbeing of individuals, families, communities and society” Wardle et al. 2018
- Individual physical, psychological, and social harms
 - Financial issues such as debt and bankruptcy
 - Relationship problems/breakdown
 - Health-related problems including depression, anxiety, sleep problems, self-harm, and suicide
 - Loss of employment
 - Housing/homelessness
 - Crime such as theft and selling drugs
 - Social harms including shame and isolation
- Wider societal costs
 - Healthcare costs
 - Welfare and employment costs
 - Housing costs
 - Criminal justice costs
- Estimate of financial costs → between £1.05 billion and £1.77 billion (note this is likely a conservative estimate due to the range of outcomes that could be costed)



Local profile: Gambling in the South East

Risk category	South East	England
Non-problem	96.1%	96.1%
Low risk	3.2%	2.7%
Moderate risk	0.5%	0.8%
Problem gambling	0.2%	0.4%



- The South East region has a population of over 8.5 million people
 - Low risk gamblers: 314,500
 - Moderate risk gamblers: 42,500
 - Problem gamblers: 17,000

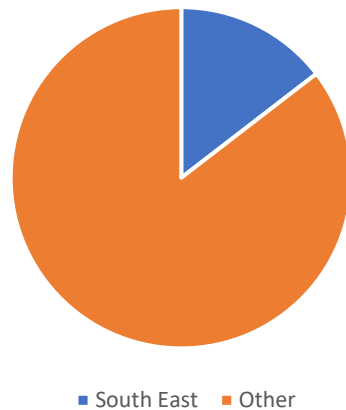
Health Survey for England 2018 – Supplementary analysis on gambling

Gambling in the South East

GamCare data (telephone calls to the GamCare helpline)

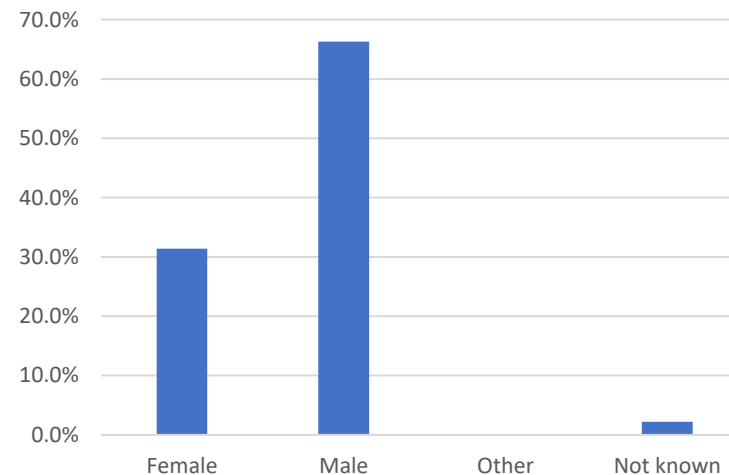
- There were 1,217 individual callers to the GamCare helpline from the South East region in 2021/2022

Callers to GamCare: South East compared to rest of England



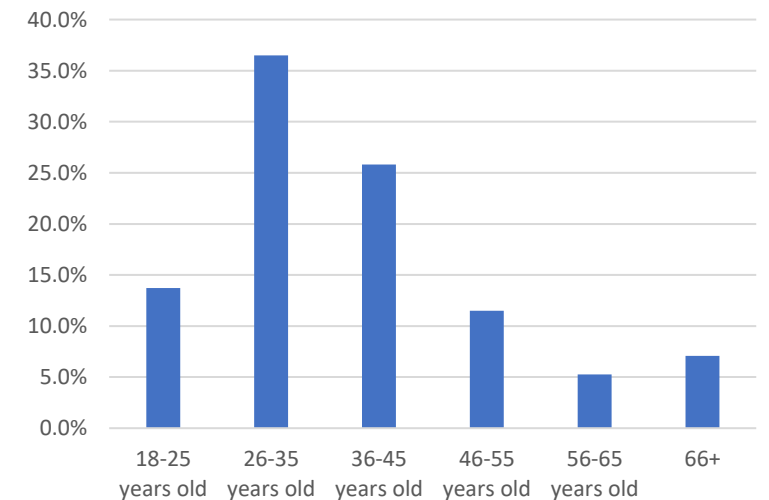
14.6% of all callers to GamCare were from the South East region

Callers to GamCare: Stated gender



66.3% of callers from the South East were male

Callers to GamCare: Stated age



The age group with the highest number of callers was 26-35 years (36.5% of callers)

Treatment and support

- There is no current NICE guidance for the treatment of gambling disorders (guidelines due Feb 2024)
- Royal College of Psychiatrists intervention/treatment hierarchy:
 - Cognitive behavioural therapy
 - Motivational interviewing/motivational enhancement therapy
 - Medication
- Seven treatment centres in England
 - Access to services variable and not informed by need
- GambleAware (charity funded by gambling industry) funds treatment, research, and prevention at national level
 - Collect data from all treatment providers
- GamCare (charity funded by GambleAware) provide information, support, and advice for people affected by gambling
 - Run the National Gambling Helpline



Treatment and support

- Southern Gambling Service

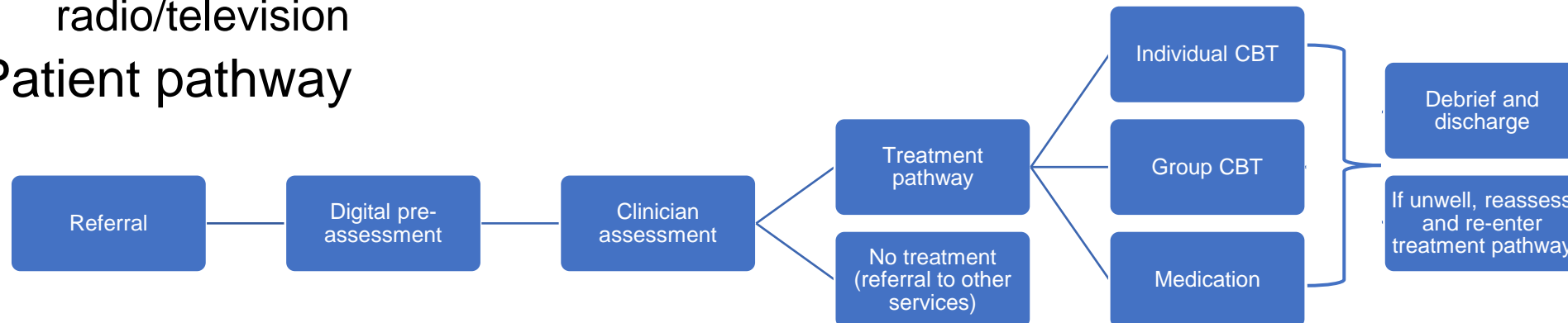
- Launched in September 2022

- Initially Southampton footprint, expanded to Hampshire and the Isle of Wight
- Planned to expand to cover the South East region by the end of 2023

- Referrals

- Self/healthcare professional (approx. 50:50)
- Service has been communicated to primary care, community mental health services, relevant local settings (e.g., homeless shelters), and the general public via radio/television

- Patient pathway



What works to reduce gambling-related harm?

Raising awareness

- Education programs:
 - Forsström et al. 2019 – only a handful of studies have shown a positive impact of school-based education programs on gambling behaviours, and the certainty of evidence was low.
- Reducing stigma:
 - Brown and Russell 2020 – understudied area in relation to gambling. Stigma is a barrier to seeking help. Learning from other stigmatising conditions, the following interventions might help: contact; education; and advocacy.

Prevention

- Reducing exposure (advertising):
 - McGrane et al. 2023 – causal relationship between exposure to gambling advertising and gambling activity at an individual and population level. This was especially true for children, young people and those at higher risk of gambling activity.

Treatment

- Evidence based practice
 - 4 systematic reviews 2019-2022 – personalised and/or normative feedback interventions have greatest positive effects on gambling behaviours



Recommendations

- The lack of local data is a challenge
- There are gaps in the evidence base but interventions that incorporate the following might be most beneficial:
 - Advocacy/re-framing gambling as a public health issue
 - Greater restrictions on gambling advertising
 - Personalised and/or normative feedback as part of the treatment pathway
- Potential for funding to support a regional gambling project
 - c. £750,000-800,000 from the Gambling Commission to fund a three-year project
 - Need to work up a bid (short timescale for application)
 - Require a lead Local Authority for the region

References

1. [LGA: Tackling gambling related harm](#)
2. [OHID: The economic and social cost of harms associated with gambling in England](#)
3. [Gov: Gambling-related harms evidence review](#)
4. [Gambling Commission: Industry statistics](#)
5. [Gambling Commission: Measuring gambling related harms](#)
6. [Royal College of Psychiatrists](#)
7. [Forsstrom et al. 2019](#)
8. [McGrane et al. 2023](#)
9. [Brown and Russell 2020](#)